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In his study of *διαθήκη* (*διατίθεσθαι*)⁴ Norton does a signal service by his careful lexicographical presentation of the classical use of the noun (verb) and by the extended discussion of the origin and development of the Greek conception of the will. The *διαθήκη* was originally a religious institution, the "solemn compact" or covenant, ratified by the phratry, whereby a man without sons adopted an heir. In time this adoption became constructive during the life and actual after the death of the adoptive father. Hence, the *διαθήκη* became the instrument establishing both the constructive and the actual adoption. Norton rightly emphasizes the fact that two parties are involved in the *διαθήκη*, of which one lays down the terms and the other agrees to them, though too much weight is attached to the scholiast's tale on Aristophanes' *Aves*, ll. 440 ff. (pp. 35-38). In view of the double connotation of *διαθήκη* it is easily seen how it rightly renders *berith* and yet lends itself to Paul's usage in Gal. 3:15-18.

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RECENT TREATISES ON THEOLOGY

It is difficult to say in a brief compass all that one would like to say of the latest volume in the "International Theological Library."¹ It is the fruit of years of thought by one of our leading American theologians upon the supreme theme of theology, and those who have found inspiration and guidance from Dr. Clarke's other writings have long been looking forward to its appearance with anticipation.

It may be said at once that these expectations are more than fulfilled. *The Christian Doctrine of God* is an instructive book, full of clear thought and independent insight; but it is something better; it is a live book, dealing with realities and not with words merely, and relying for its appeal upon the assent of the reader's own experience. The spirit in which it is written may be gathered from the dedication, *Deus accipiat*.

A striking feature of the book is the absence of any reference to other writers on the same subject. While fully conversant with the literature of his theme, Dr. Clarke cites no one, and controverts no one. He deals with reasons rather than with authorities, and his argument depends for

⁴ *A Lexicographical and Historical Study of Διαθήκη from the Earliest Times to the End of the Classical Period*. "Historical and Linguistic Studies," Second Series, Vol. I, Part VI. By Frederick D. Norton, Ph.D. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1908. 71 pages. \$0.79 postpaid.

¹ *The Christian Doctrine of God*. ("International Theological Library.") By William Newton Clarke, D.D. New York: Scribner, 1909. 12+477 pages. \$2.50.

its power of conviction upon its own inherent luminousness. This gives the book a simplicity and unity refreshing in these days of exaggerated parade of learning, and, if the method has its disadvantages in leaving the reader sometimes in doubt as to the historic relations of the positions taken, the corresponding advantages are so great that he will not be disposed unduly to criticize.

The main subdivisions of the book are four. After an introduction dealing with method and sources, the author discusses in succession the nature of God, his relation to men, his relation to the universe, and, finally, the reasons for believing that such a being as the Christian God exists. While the positions taken are, in substance, those already made familiar to his readers by his earlier book, *An Outline of Christian Theology*, there are numerous changes in detail which are interesting and significant. The section on the nature of God is concerned primarily with his character as Christianity conceives it, which is summed up comprehensively in the three great words, love, holiness, and wisdom, in the unity of which consists the goodness of the one personal God. This holy and loving God reveals himself in his relations to men as Creator, Father, Sovereign, and Savior.

The treatment of the sovereignty of God leads Dr. Clarke to a discussion of the doctrine of providence, and incidentally, of miracle, which he defines strictly in the older sense, as the ability of God, for the sake of his providential purpose, sometimes to depart from the order of nature (p. 204). While admitting that such a departure may have taken place, Dr. Clarke assigns miracle a subordinate place. "The certainties that are the food of eternal life," he tells us, "which alone are essential to religion, are certainties in themselves, of which man can become sure for himself through fellowship with God" (p. 207). Miracles do not fall in this category, and therefore the question whether or no they have occurred is not a vital question in religion (p. 206).

In connection with his discussion of God's saving activity Dr. Clarke is led to consider the doctrine of the Trinity, which, for him, expresses the conception of God to which Christians are naturally led through an analysis of the facts of the redeemed life. We see here a marked change in point of view. Whereas, in the *Outline*, the Trinity was regarded as a truth concerning God in himself (the tri-unity, as Dr. Clarke there phrased it), here all attempts at ontological construction are abandoned, and the full meaning of the doctrine is found in its relation to the personal Christian experience. The Trinity, as Dr. Clarke conceives it, is a doctrine of the redeeming God, and hence can only be rightly apprehended in connection with the experience of salvation.

Passing to the doctrine of freedom, one notes a certain lack of clearness in the definition of terms. Freedom on man's part is declared to be inconsistent with predetermination on the part of God (p. 170), and valiant war is waged against predestination. Yet a doctrine of moral omnipotence is insisted upon as essential to the Christian idea of God, which is, in fact, a doctrine of moral determinism (cf. especially p. 356).

Most interesting of all is Dr. Clarke's discussion of the evidence upon which faith in the Christian God depends. He passes over the old arguments lightly as no longer adequate under the changed conditions of the modern world. He rests his case chiefly upon two lines of reasoning, the evidence from the rational, the immanent teleology which is involved in the very structure of the universe, and which is the implicit assumption of all thought; and the evidence from the spiritual, basing itself upon man's moral and religious nature, which postulates a being akin to man in character, as well as in thought, and finds its complete satisfaction only in the Christian God.

Dr. Clarke is well aware of the practical difficulties of holding such a faith. He looks with open eyes at the familiar facts of sin and suffering and failure, but he believes that a solution of the problems which they suggest is possible. This solution he finds where all devout natures have found it, in the fruits of character which they have produced in those who have met them in the Christian spirit. Our difficulty lies in the fact that there are so many in whom these fruits are not yet apparent. "If we could confidently include the vast movement of sin between a Godworthy origin and a Godworthy outcome, we might sadly wonder on the way, but we could rest in hope" (p. 461). Such hope the Christian doctrine of God makes possible. "Christianity does not accept the dilemma that if God is love he is not almighty, and if he is almighty he is not love. It believes that he is both" (p. 461). And in this faith it finds its solution of the ultimate problems.

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To the "constant reader" of theological reviews there is a threefold classification which is preliminary to all other canons of evaluation, in approaching any new contribution to theological science. Is the author controlled by the traditional method and point of view, in his treatment? Or, is he under the spell of the modern, critical-scientific interpretative method? Or, is he a "mediating" theologian? President Strong is

readily classified. He pours his old wine into the old bottles, and even retains the old labels and corks. And there is good wine here.

The two volumes which had already appeared of this latest edition of *Systematic Theology*, make the work of the reviewer of the third volume² superfluous for those who are familiar with Dr. Strong's doctrinal positions. The new edition is ampler, owing to the expansion of the discussions at certain points. But the method of treatment, both in its grand divisions and in its orderly subtopics, remain unchanged. The spirit and the point of view are substantially identical with those of the earlier editions.

Since this is so, detailed criticism of the volume would be profitless. The encyclopedic massing of sources, opinions, and illustrations, which has constituted Dr. Strong's previous editions valuable reference books on doctrine, is even more in evidence in this enlarged edition. Some of us owe a great deal to these suggestive sidelights of history and of illustration; though perhaps this value is homiletic rather than philosophically constructive.

The subject of this present volume is "Soteriology, or the Doctrine of Salvation." It includes the author's discussion of the "Application of Redemption," "The Doctrine of the Church," and "The Doctrine of Final Things."

The same strong, faithful, reasoned support of his doctrinal positions is everywhere in evidence. The author is both an honored thinker and a religious power to be reckoned with. His logical gifts are earnestly placed at the service of his religion. This vigorous, virile note of conviction of truth has always made Dr. Strong's work vital; and we think this volume will have genuine suggestion even for some who are not in sympathy with its method. Many modern discussions of theology, striving after "correct method," seem to us to miss both the consistency of really great thinking, and the vital religious conviction or experience which must be the starting-point of all theology that is worth while. Dr. Strong seems to the reviewer to perform the teacher's function in religious explanation with a feeling for reality that is sadly wanting in some modern essays in theological interpretation that are tuned to the present *Zeitgeist*.

Nevertheless, we could wish that the author's great philosophic powers and his vigorous personality would guide us in interpreting the faith of our fathers into the language that men are using today. Many of us believe that the older thought-terms and the traditional method are obsolescent if

² *Systematic Theology*. Vol. III, Soteriology, or the Doctrine of Salvation. By A. H. Strong. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1909. xix + 389 pages. \$2.50.

not quite obsolete. Only such a vigorous personality as Dr. Strong's can galvanize them into semblance to living forms of thought. What a steady power he would be in guiding a modern reconstruction of theology! For that reconstruction is surely coming; and this volume aids us very little in attaining a satisfying point of view or in mastering principles that will be both congenial and authoritative for the thinking of the age that has dawned.

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RECENT BOOKS ON CHRISTIAN ETHICS

In view of the fact that our modern ethical problems are being considered and formulated with new definiteness by psychology and social science today, one turns to a book bearing the title *The Christian Method of Ethics* with interest not unmixed with apprehension.¹ Is there a distinctly *Christian* method in ethical science? And if so, will it commend itself to an age which demands thorough and critical examination of all problems? Mr. Clarke recognizes that the Christian is often quite as much bewildered as anyone else as to his duty. But he insists that this bewilderment ought to be eliminated by religious discipline rather than by a non-religious study of life. "The fundamental reason for lack of equipment on the ethical side lies in the fact that the Christian's ethical program is not sought for in the right way. The ethical or practical side of the Christian's life is looked upon as a thing detached; and it is not perceived that Christian practical ideals are rightly formulated only when they are translations into practical life of the one religious ideal" (p. 16). Mr. Clarke's method thus consists in expounding and applying the Christian mysticism which he had previously set forth in his *Philosophy of Christian Experience*.² The Christian is to be so completely in communion with the divine Spirit that he no longer makes human judgments but attains "the supplanting of man's activity by God's own, and thus provides for that automatic adoption of right courses wherein the ultimate ethical attainment consists" (p. 79). "Conscience, for the distinctively Christian man, must be taken as a monitor declaring that not he, but the divine life within him, is to make the choice." One is tempted to ask whether automatic activity due to alien control can be moral at all. To be sure, the situation is saved by the fact which the author regretfully admits, that practically no one is able thus to eliminate his own judgment. One is compelled repeatedly to make

¹ *The Christian Method of Ethics*. By Henry W. Clarke. New York and Chicago: Revell, 1908. 254 pages. \$1.25.

² Reviewed in the *American Journal of Theology*, XI, 359.